

Devotional Studies No. 20

Cruciality of the Cross

Is the Cross of Jesus crucial in your life? As one reflects upon the Cross of God's Anointed One, one is immediately confronted with the importance of the Cross of Jesus in God's scheme of redemption for lost humanity. When one tells the story of the Cross, one tells the story of the Gospel. If someone were to ask you, what is the Gospel of Redemption? What would you say? Surely, the answer is the Cross. God tasted death for every person. In the Cross of Christ, one sees forgiveness for the sins of both men and women. Out of one's response to God's way of salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ, one meets responsibility face-to-face—a change in one's ethical behavior. For instance, in the Sermon on the Mount, one witnesses Jesus' teaching about the social implications of the Gospel.

One of these social teachings of Jesus focuses upon forgiveness, which behavior is often very difficult for God's people. Yet, this practice is one that lacks implementation among many Christians. Apart from the social implications, one is consciously aware that the Cross is not only the story of the Gospel, but is itself the history of the Gospel. This event in time changed the relationship between God and humanity as well as a change of relationships between men and women. Paul issues this admonition: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" ([Ephesians 4:32](#)). One problem that stands in the way of forgiveness is bitterness. In order for one to practice forgiveness, one must eliminate this feeling from one's heart. Again, listen to Paul as he writes: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" ([4:31](#)). God's forgiveness is demonstrated in the Cross. It is because of the Cross that individuals can forgive others. Forgiveness is just one aspect of the Cross of Jesus.

The Cross of Christ is not just one event in history among a dreary catalogue of unrelated events, but rather it is the big event. It is this event that gives meaning to the whole of life. In this central event of history, one sees the utter degradation of humanity as well as the deeper depth of God's holy love. The Cross of Christ reveals the real nature and meaning of evil in this world. In Christ's crucifixion, one sees sin acted out in all its naked blasphemy. This act of crucifixion, in and of itself, is not the darkest deed in all of history since many had been crucified. What makes this the darkest deed in all of history is the One who died there—Incarnate Righteousness and Love. Here was One in whose presence many felt the presence of God.

What does the Cross mean to you? Are you crucifying the Son of God afresh by

your lifestyle? Sin is seen at its worst in this crucifixion. It killed the Son of God. This is “absolute zero”; it is the very rock bottom of moral evil. Yet, in the crucifixion, one sees another story—God’s love. In this horrible death, one observes God’s atoning and redeeming action in the Passion of that Man upon the Cross. The Cross is not just theological fiction or some historical fact, but it is the event of God’s amazing and costly wonder of forgiveness. The Cross is not only an act of Pilate, but an act of God—slain from the foundation of the world. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. It is this Gospel that has moved the world. Has this Gospel moved you in the way you live and act? One cannot deny the benefits of the Cross by rejecting the social and moral implications of the Gospel.

In the Cross of Jesus, one sees righteousness and grace fused together. The Cross is something actual—it is love Incarnate. Even though Christ submitted Himself for crucifixion, nevertheless, Christ is not a passive victim in this drama of sin and salvation, but an actor from Gethsemane to Calvary, all for the redemption of humanity. On this Cross, one hears the cry of desolation—My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? He did this in order to prevent humanity crying out—My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Was Christ saying “amen” on behalf of humanity to the rightful judgment of God upon the sins of the world? This cry from the Cross reminds every believer of the utter desolation of the Son of God—utterly alone.

Jesus did something to human history. Do you just talk about the mysteries of the Faith? One may talk about religion by the hour, and yet it may not be the dominant and abiding motive of his or her life. Christ takes a back seat. One should always be conscious that the Church is not simply a body of people who hold to correct teaching, but rather the church holds to Christ as the Savior of the world. No Christian who has set himself or herself to do the will of God will spurn God’s call for commitment. Are you committed to God’s Gospel? What does the Cross of Jesus mean to you? Is the Cross of Jesus crucial in your life?